

BOOK SOURCE

Cover

911

THE BOOK OF HELP



AUTHORS RESPOND
TO THE TRAGEDY

911

THE BOOK OF HELP



DUNLAP MIDDLE SCHOOL
5200 W. Cedar Hills Drive
DUNLAP, IL 61525

EDITED BY MICHAEL CART
WITH MARC ARONSON AND MARIANNE CARUS



CRICKET BOOKS
A Marcato Book
CHICAGO



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INTRODUCTION

Michael Cart

HEALING

"No one has been untouched . . ."

Katherine Paterson

David Paterson

Russell Freedman

Joan Bauer

Sonya Sones

SEARCHING FOR HISTORY

Putting 9/11 in the Context of a Personal Past

Jim Murphy

James Cross Giblin

Avi

Kyoko Mori

Susan Cooper

ASKING WHY? WHY? WHY?

Our Persistent Struggle to Understand

Nikki Giovanni

Marc Aronson and Marina Budhos

Virginia Euwer Wolff

Suzanne Fisher Staples

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DESPERATE ACTS (FOR 9/11)

BY NIKKI GIOVANNI

It's not easy to understand
Why angry men commit
Desperate acts

It's not easy to understand
How some dreams become
Nightmares

Those who wish
And those who need
Often feel alone

It's easy to strike back
But it's hard to understand

100

WHY? WHY? WHY

BY MARC ARONSON AND MARINA BUDHØS

We can ask why these thousand times, and more, for every person killed in the attacks on September 11, for every family ripped apart, for every plan and hope and dream destroyed. We do have any idea how to answer those tragic questions. But there is another kind of why question that we can begin to answer: why did it happen? Why now? What is going on in the world, in year 2001, that would lead to such destruction? That is what history can do for us: it can help us to understand.

Something new was taking place at the very end of the last century: for the very first time in human history there was one nation that dominated the entire planet, and that was, of course, the United States. We are by far the largest economy; we have the strongest armies; we have the most influence over other nations. There have always been strong nations and empires,

childhood," said one young New Yorker as she told the stories of her experience that day.

It is those stories that have survived the end of her childhood. It is stories that survive us. Our stories begin before birth and extend beyond death into the memory of those affected by our briefly flickering, fragile lives. Stories, which seem so ephemeral, often last longer than physical realities. As one of Isaac Bashevis Singer's characters says, "Today we live, but by tomorrow today will be a story. The whole world, all human life, is one long story."

We humans are a narrative species. In the concentration camp, starving inmates stuffed bits and pieces of their story into stone walls. In a sunken Russian submarine, the dying sailor used his last breath to write what was happening. The true dimensions of the events we have mourned since September 11 emerge in stories of life, death, and response. As listeners, we build complete stories out of fragments, for stories are what is heard, interpreted, and imagined, as well as what is told, and every story is a collaboration of teller and listener or reader. Phone messages from the doomed become capsules of a life imagined by us, or retold by the caller's loved ones in person, in print, and in electronic media.

Beyond such tragedies the pathway to recovery often lies through stories of humor or chance or apparent diversion that allow symbolic encounter and restoration. In 1945, Jean Cocteau shocked a French population devastated by World War II with his filming of "Beauty and the Beast," a fairy tale that seemed of slight importance compared to the harsh realities of survival. Yet Cocteau was dealing with survival—even revival—of the spirit. He saw his work as archeology of the soul, as resurrection and redemption of the human spirit from the ruins of the war. In that same period, a Jewish refugee named Jella Lepman

163



SURVIVAL BY STORY

BY BETSY HEARNE

The phoenix is a bird that dies in fire every five hundred years. Yet always, from its ashes, arises a newborn bird. This mythical creature has survived in human lore since ancient times and has flown across continents of imagination for a reason: because all of us know that some stories have no happy ending—at times, we must somehow simply start over. The unearthly crimson-and-gold phoenix has risen recently in my own mind, engraved as it is since September 11 with the image of an unearthly crimson-and-gold explosion that held no happy endings for those immolated, for those left behind to grieve, or for those—especially the young—shaken by the sudden possibilities of random, heartless death. We can never recover the perished or the perishable sense of security that died on that day. We must start over with what rises from the ashes. But how? "September 11 was the end of my

22

returned to Germany, where she founded the International Youth Library—and later the International Board on Books for Young People—amidst the ruins of Munich, because she believed that the real hope for peace lay in crossing boundaries with books instead of bombs, in children's understanding their common humanity through reading stories about one another. Today, the stories emerging from our recent devastation have already drawn us closer across many boundaries. Ultimately, one of those boundaries we cross, over the story bridge of our common humanity, must be one that separates us from our enemies. The phoenix, according to Greek legend, lived in Arabia but flew everywhere—and reached, eventually, the life-giving sun.

COLLIDING STORIES

BY MARGARET MAHY

The phone rang in the early hours of the morning. Well, I am used to that. I am a writer, living in New Zealand, and my publishers (being largely on the other side of the world) are in a different time zone. Anyhow, as I reached for the phone I was aware that, once again, I had gone to sleep while blinking at the ancient television that stands at the foot of my bed. I often go to sleep, entranced by the late-night news, which can be rather like watching a series of quick horror stories.

That television set was speaking to me in a voice both urgent and serious. The voice at the other end of the phone—a voice that belonged to my daughter in London—was urgent and serious, too.

"Something terrible has happened," she told me. "Terrorists have attacked New York. They have crashed planes into the World Trade Center."

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Back of book

The terrorist attacks in New York City, Washington, D.C., and in the skies over Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001, have left many questioning what can be done—beyond the immediate, heroic efforts of firefighters, police, and many others—to aid the victims and make sense of this tragedy. Ironically, the numerical notation of the date, 9/11, is also the number to call for assistance in an emergency, 911. The essays, stories, poems, and artwork in *911: The Book of Help* were contributed by the following authors and illustrators of young adult literature who hope their insights and experiences may be of help, too.

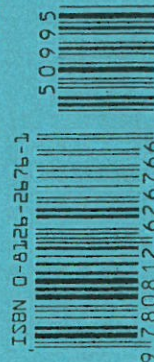
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